

## Helping the Explorers; The Metis

Explorers came to Canada from England and France in the 1500's. They met indigenous people who had been living in Canada for thousands of years.



The indigenous people helped the explorers to live in Canada.



<https://www.warpaths2peacepipes.com/native-american-life/birch-bark-canoe.htm>

They helped them to understand the land and waters of Canada. They helped them to make canoes from trees. They showed them maps of the land and waters on birch bark.



1

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Canada has many lakes and rivers. They helped them to find their way on the lakes and rivers.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_rivers\\_of\\_Canada#/media/File:Rivers-Canada-frame.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_rivers_of_Canada#/media/File:Rivers-Canada-frame.png)

Indigenous people helped the explorers to find food. They were excellent hunters, trappers, and fishers. They taught the explorers how to hunt, trap, and fish so they could survive.



Indigenous people knew about the animals of Canada.

The biggest animal hunt on the prairies was for buffalo. One buffalo gave lots of meat (about 700 kg). Buffalo is also called bison.

2

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The buffalo was dried and stored for a long time. Today, it would be called "jerky".

Women prepared pemmican – dried meat pounded into a powder. The powder was mixed with buffalo fat and berries when it was needed. A hunter carried pemmican in a small bag when he was away from camp.

Explorers learned about pemmican from indigenous peoples; it was a nutritious food for them to eat also.



3

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Indigenous people also knew about the plants of Canada. They gathered plants from the land to use as food and as medicine.



<https://www.ojibwatea.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/indianwheel.jpg>

Some of the explorers married Indigenous women. This was a good partnership for explorers. A wife could speak the indigenous language and talk with other people for her husband. Their children were called Metis.

The word Metis is a French word meaning "mixed". A Metis person has a mix of bloodlines – part indigenous, and part European (usually French). The Metis chose the infinity symbol for their culture.



<https://www.casestudies.chandl.org/casestudy/1307460755710/1307460872523>

[https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailv2&ccid=UpP52baWcV&id=4F3FE487D78AA82550DA92338035DD02826C70F&thid=OIP-qWcyWAAX3D94-h3hg5fDQ&q=hunting+trapping+binoculars&simid=408020830964582027&selectedindex=23&ajaxurl=/firstpeopleofcanada/images/firstnations/tp\\_furtrade/huntingbuffalo.ppt&itp=...](https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailv2&ccid=UpP52baWcV&id=4F3FE487D78AA82550DA92338035DD02826C70F&thid=OIP-qWcyWAAX3D94-h3hg5fDQ&q=hunting+trapping+binoculars&simid=408020830964582027&selectedindex=23&ajaxurl=/firstpeopleofcanada/images/firstnations/tp_furtrade/huntingbuffalo.ppt&itp=...)

<http://natyvesalcanada.blogspot.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderpictures/pemmican.jpg>

# Helping the Explorers: Comprehension Questions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions in complete sentences:

1. Did the indigenous people help the explorers to live in Canada?

## Water

2. What did they use to make canoes?
3. Did the Indigenous people know the lakes and rivers of Canada?

## Meat

4. Name 3 ways that Indigenous people could get food.
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
5. What was the biggest animal on the prairies?
6. How much meat was in one buffalo?
7. What did they do to the buffalo so it would not spoil?
8. What did the women prepare?



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9. What was mixed with the dried meat to make pemmican?

10. How did a hunter carry pemmican?

### **Plants**

11. Name two things that Indigenous people used plants for:

a.

b.

### **Friendship**

12. How did Indigenous women help their European husbands?

13. What does Metis mean?

14. Why do you think the Metis chose the "infinity" symbol for their culture?

15. Look at the pictures in this assignment. Write about what you see.



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